

312-14 SOUTH SIXTH STREET (Double house)  
Jeannette  
Westmoreland County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-6133

HABS  
PA  
65-JEAN,  
26-

PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
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ADDENDUM TO:  
312-314 SOUTH SIXTH STREET (DOUBLE HOUSE)  
Jeannette  
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HABS PA-6133  
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### 312-314 SOUTH SIXTH STREET (DOUBLE HOUSE)

HABS No. PA-6133

**LOCATION:** 312-314 South Sixth Street, Jeannette, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania

**SIGNIFICANCE:** A high concentration of window, tableware, bottle and specialty glass plants distinguished Jeannette as "The Glass City" early in its history. Significant housing stock consists of company-built row and detached double houses, and several privately constructed dwellings.

#### PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Census records provide more detailed information on residents here when the double house was under the ownership of the Western Land & Improvement Company. In 1900, glass blower George Rifenburg, his wife Christina, and their six children lived at No. 312. The children, two daughters and four sons, ranged in age from 3 to 19 years old. Two of the boys, ages 14 and 16, were also employed in the glass works. No listing appears in the 1900 census manuscripts for No. 314, but in 1910, a 35-year-old widow named Bertha Moorehead rented out this half. Her sister, brother, two daughters and two roomers lived there as well. Bertha's occupation is listed as providing private rooming, a common category in the census manuscripts for widowed women. The two men in the household, Bertha's brother Eugene Laidig and a roomer named Joseph Runyon, were employed at the rubber works and flint works respectively.

Living at No. 312 in 1910 was another widow named Sarah White with her son, daughter, son-in-law, and grandson. Sarah's son Abraham was a blower in the bottle works as was his brother-in-law Joseph Fragesser. The women did not work outside the home. All members of the household were native Pennsylvanians whose parents had also been born in the state. Though such uniformity was not common, this was also the case with their neighbors in No. 314.

Louis R. Schmertz was the original purchaser of this and the other six double houses in this section. Schmertz, who lived on North Second and then in Greensburg, was a superintendent at the American Window Glass Company, the successor firm to the Chambers & McKee Glass Company. In 1919, Schmertz sold all seven of the double houses to Jeannette clothier Jacob Girvetz and his wife Freda. Girvetz sold this particular double house in 1923. They listed that year as living in another double house across the street. The new owners for Nos. 312-14 were William and Maud Brown. William is listed as a rubber worker and then laborer in city directories, with a previous address

down the street in one of the row houses. It appears the Browns lived in No. 314 until the 1940s, using the other half as a rental property.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

This house is one of a group of seven double houses sold by the Western Land & Improvement Company for \$21,000 in 1916, long after most of the other brick double houses in this area had been sold. Rear porches were added to each ell while the Improvement Company still owned it, though the alterations were done at different times. The two-story rear extensions date from after 1925.

## PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

*Insurance Maps of Jeannette, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania.* New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1891, 1895, 1900, 1905, 1910, 1916, 1925, 1950.

Deed Books. Recorder of Deeds, Westmoreland County Courthouse, Greensburg, Pennsylvania, 596/469, 666/544, 756/430, 1320/603.

City Directories, 1897, 1913, 1923, 1928, 1948, 1960.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. 1910 census manuscripts on microfilm.

## PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

In February 1987, the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) and the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) began a multi-year historical and architectural documentation project in southwestern Pennsylvania. Carried out in conjunction with America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), HABS and HAER undertook a comprehensive documentation of Jeannette, documenting industries, housing and cultural institutions.

## PART V. RELATED INFORMATION

For an overview of the double houses, see HABS No. PA-6090, Western Land & Improvement Company Double Houses.